

Claims

1. A communications system comprising:

a first communications node;

5 a second communications node;

a plurality of charging nodes; and

a memory;

said first node comprising means for sending information to at least one of
said charging nodes,

10 said second node comprises means for sending information to at least one of
said charging nodes,

said memory comprising means for storing information identifying at least one
of said charging nodes; wherein

15 said first node and said second node are arranged to send respective
information to the same said at least one charging node in dependence on said
information stored in said memory.

2. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first or second
node comprise means for selecting the said at least one charging node dependent
20 on the context of communication data passing between said first node and said
second node.

3. A communications system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the context of
communications data is dependent on at least one of:

25 a subscriber requesting or transmitting said communications data;

a session requested by said subscriber;

a packet data protocol used in said session requested by said subscriber.

4. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said
30 communications system is a UMTS architecture communications system.

5. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said
communications system is a GPRS architecture communications system.

6. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first communications node is a gateway GPRS service node (GGSN).

7. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second communications node is a serving GPRS support node (SGSN).

8. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one charging node comprises a charging gateway function (CGF).

9. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one charging node is a charging gateway (CG).

10. A communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said memory is located within said first or said second communications node.

11. A communications system as claimed in claim 10, further comprising a second memory located within the other of said first or second communications node, wherein said second memory is arranged to store information identifying at least one of said charging nodes and said second memory is arranged so that the value stored in said memory is synchronised with the value stored in said second memory.

12. A communications system as claimed in claim 11, wherein said information sent by at least one of said first and second nodes comprises at least one data record.

13. A method for billing in a communications system comprising the steps of:
sending information from a first communications node to at least one of a plurality of charging nodes,
sending information to a second communications node to at least one of a plurality of charging nodes,
storing in a memory information identifying at least one of said plurality of charging nodes; wherein

said first communications node and said second communications node are arranged to send respective information to the same at least one said charging node dependent on said information stored in said memory.

5 14. A method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising the step of:

selecting at least one charging node dependent on the context of communication data passing between said first communications node and said second communications node.

10 15. A method as claimed in claim 14, further comprising the step of:

passing a value identifying said selected at least one charging node to said memory device.

15 16. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the step of selecting said at least one charging node is dependent on at least one of:

a subscriber requesting or transmitting said communications data;

a session requested by said subscriber;

a packet data protocol used in said session requested by said subscriber.

20 17. A method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising the step of storing in a further memory device said information identifying at least one of said plurality of charging nodes.

25 18. A method as claimed in claim 17, further comprising the step of maintaining said memory and said second memory so that the information identifying at least one of said charging nodes is the same.

30 19. A communication node for use in a communication system, said node being arranged to send information to a charging node, said node comprising a memory for storing information identifying the charging node to which said node is to send said information.

20. A node as claimed in claim 20, wherein said node is arranged to send said information in said memory to a second node.